



# Walters assumes HED command

*Story by Alexander Kufel*

**A**rmy engineering in Hawaii saw a change in leadership July 2 when Col. Ralph H. Graves, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Honolulu Engineer District, relinquished command to Lt. Col. Wally Z. Walters in 10 a.m. ceremonies at Fort Shafter. Col. (P) Carl A. Strock, Commander of Pacific Ocean Division, officiated.

An overcast morning gave way to clear, sunny skies as the ceremony began, with about 200 guests and employees in attendance at the Fort Shafter Palm Circle parade field. Among the audience were military and government leaders, including Representatives Neil Abercrombie and Patsy Mink.

Strock passed the symbolic flag of command from Graves to Walters, with Elsie Smith, senior length-of-service employee, assisting. The flag transfer marked the change of command from the Honolulu District's 63rd to its 64th commander.

Distinguishing the ceremony to change commanders was the promotion of Graves from the rank of lieutenant colonel to colonel. Graves had been selected for the higher rank several months before and was officially promoted the day before he left command.

In remarks during the ceremonies, Abercrombie spoke cordially of his relationship with Graves, commenting that the Corps had a special place in his heart as the first government organization to



*Members of the 249th Engineer Battalion color guard march into position opening the change of command ceremonies. Photo by Jim Dung.*

officially welcome him when he first assumed elective office in Hawaii. He then welcomed the new commander.

Graves had served as District commander and district engineer since July 6, 1995. He and his family left July 5 for his next assignment with the Army's Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management in Washington, D.C.

## Matters of Affordability and Downsizing won't wait

### Hard issues first items of business for new commander

**T**he honeymoon was over before it had hardly begun, according to incoming HED Commander Lt. Col. Wally Z. Walters. In only his second week in his new command, Walters told a Town Hall Meeting of district employees that personnel cuts were inevitable due to declining workload and income to pay salaries. He reported as many as 49 people could be involuntarily separated as the District considers drawing down from 419 to 353 positions by the end of next fiscal year. The remaining cuts he expected could

be handled through attrition and buy-out and incentive retirement programs. These might even prove to significantly reduce the total number of involuntary separations.

"Normally when one assumes a new command, you can expect maybe a couple of weeks of appropriate honeymoon period," he said. "I feel like this one has been more like about two hours," he told a group of about 200 employees at Fort Shafter's Richardson Theater.

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